

If you find yourself in need of information, support or referrals, please call G.E.A.R. Parent Network at: 1-800-264-9224 and visit us at: www.gearparentnetwork.org

A Caring Message...



for your Precious Ones

Dear Caregiver,

All of us at G.E.A.R. Parent Network and the Family Advisory Councils for Empowerment Statewide join in welcoming your new baby!

Our best wishes come with this gentle reminder to make as much time for your and your child's emotional well-being as you do for all the physical aspects of health. On those days when life seems overwhelming, *please remember that you are not alone*. Many people are ready to support you and your child. In that spirit, we offer these ideas...

- Reach out for help if you feel you need it, don't hesitate
- Call a trusted friend or family member whenever you need to
- Find a helpful group for parenting skills or stress management
- Ask other parents about their experiences and how they coped
- Call your or your child's healthcare practitioner when you need to
- Read a pamphlet or a website
- *It's not taboo to take care of yourself, too!*

.....✂

PLEDGE TO PROTECT

Dear _____,

As your _____, I pledge to protect your complete well-being, that means your feelings as well as your body, and mine too.

When I feel stressed out, I promise to reach out for support or have the courage to look at my own childhood to see whether my experiences are contributing to the stress I am feeling.

I also promise to

... love you unconditionally, holding, rocking, calming and comforting you, and encouraging you to calm yourself.
... choose alternatives to belittling, harming or rejecting your mistakes, and communicate confidence, optimism and good results instead.
... praise you for every accomplishment, large or small.
... encourage you to try things and do things with minimal adult help.
... be an example to you, as you learn to communicate, to express your feelings and recognize feelings in others, like sad, happy, sorry, angry.
... prepare you when you get older for adversity, by reading books, play acting, listening to your concerns.
... teach you resiliency by modeling it, for example saying: 'I know I can do this,' when I face adversity, so that when you

face adversity, I can say: 'I know you can do this. Give it a try. I am here for you.'
... accept you for who you are and how you manage your world, not try to change you, only guide you.
... balance your freedom to explore with safe supports.
... offer explanation and reconciliation along with rules and discipline.
... comfort and encourage you when you experience stress.
... provide a stable environment and also allow you new experiences, people and places.

I pledge to do whatever I can to give you the best self-esteem and emotional wellness possible.

With love,

Caregiver

Caregiver